THE ADVENT

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The Advent

It is not the soul but the ego and its pride that feel defeat and humiliation.

The ADVENT

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In all things there is a cycle of their actions
and a period of the divine movement.

SRI AUROBINDO

This golden figure.....
Hid in its breast the key of all his aims,
A spell to bring the Immortal's bliss on earth.

Sri Aurobindo : (Savitri)

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The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS*

THE MOTHER'S COMMENTARY

ON THE

DHAMMAPADA

(continued)

I

They who are intelligent, meditative, persevering, combat ceaselessly against themselves, reach the Nirvana that is supreme felicity.

He who is full of zeal, he who is mindful, he who is pure in deed, and acts thoughtfully, who is self-controlled and lives in accordance with the Law sees his fame ever growing.

* Based on the Mother's Talks.

THIS promise of a good name does not seem to me quite worthy of the Buddhistic teaching. Possibly it means some other thing. And to live according to the moral law, one must know what moral law is intended, for if it is the usually recognised social morality, that also does not seem to me a very alluring promise. They who have decided to abandon all worldly weaknesses certainly do not care to satisfy social morality...nor to acquire a good name!

To be full of zeal is an excellent thing, to be pure in deed is also indispensable, to act thoughtfully is also perfect, one does not do it too often; to control one's passions, that goes without saying, it is the beginning...but that conclusion!!

However I see Dhamma has been translated here as "Law", and "yasa" as fame, whereas Dhamma should mean rather the inner truth and Yasa the spiritual glory. So we can interpret the text in this way: "whoever is full of zeal, pure in deed, acts thoughtfully, controls his passions, lives according to the inner truth, will see his spiritual glory ever growing.

By his zeal and vigilance and discipline and self-control, the intelligent man should create an island for himself which no flood can overwhelm.

The stupid, devoid of intelligence, give themselves to negligence. The intelligent guards vigilance as the supreme treasure.

Do not give yourself to negligence nor to the enjoyment of the passions. It is the vigilant, given to meditation, that attains the vast happiness.

The wise dispel negligence by vigilance, they climb to the heights of wisdom and griefless themselves they contemplate from a hilltop as it were the ignorant ones grieving on the plains.

Vigilant among the negligent, wide awake among the slumberous, one intelligent goes fast like a steed that leaves behind a faint mount.

By vigilance Indra has become supreme among the gods. Vigilance is praiseworthy. Negligence is always blameworthy.

The Bhikkhu who is given to vigilance and who shuns negligence moves forward like a fire consuming all bonds, great or small.

The Bhikkhu who is given to vigilance and who shuns negligence never goes astray, he moves near unto Nirvana.

I have read out to you the whole chapter, because it seemed to me that it is the totality of the verses that creates an atmosphere and they are meant to be taken all together at once and not each one separately. But I strongly recommend to you not to take the words used here in their usual literal sense.

Thus, for example, I am quite convinced that the original thought did not mean that you are to be vigilant in order that you may be admired and that you must not be negligent in order not to have blame. Besides, the example given proves it, for certainly it was not for the sake of gaining admiration that Indra, the chief of the overmental gods in the Hindu tradition, practised vigilance. It is a very puerile way of saying things. Yet, if you take these verses all together, they have by their repetition and insistence a power of evocation of the thing that seeks expression; it puts you in relation with a psychological attitude which is very useful and has a very considerable effect, if you follow the discipline.

The last two verses particularly are very evocative. The Bhikkhu moves forward like a burning flame of aspiration and he shuns negligence.

Negligence means truly the relaxation of the will which makes one forget his goal and pass his time in doing all kinds of things which, far from contributing towards the goal to be attained, stops you on the way and often turns you away from it. Therefore the flame of aspiration makes the Bhikkhu abhor negligence. Every moment one remembers that time is short relatively, one must

not waste it on the way, one must go quick, as quick as possible, without losing a moment. And he who is vigilant, who does not lose his time, sees his bondages falling one and all—great and small, all his difficulties vanish, owing to his vigilance; and if he persists in his attitude, finding in it entire satisfaction, which happens after a time, the happiness felt in being vigilant becomes so strong that soon he would feel unhappy if he were to lose this vigilance.

It is a fact that when one is bent on not losing time on the way, any time lost becomes a suffering and one can find no pleasure of any kind in that. And once you are in that condition, once this effort for progress and transformation becomes the most important thing in your life, the one to which you give constant thought, then indeed you are on the path towards the eternal existence, the truth of your being.

Certainly there is a moment in the course of the inner growth when far from having to make an effort for concentrating, for getting absorbed in the contemplation and the seeking of the truth and its best expression—what the Buddhists call meditation —you feel, on the contrary, a kind of relief, ease, rest, joy and to come out of that in order to be busy with things that are not at all essential, all that may look like wasting time becomes terribly painful. External activities get reduced to the absolute necessity, to those that are done as service to the Divine. All that is futile, useless, which precisely appears like wasting time and effort, all that, far from giving the least satisfaction, creates a kind of discomfort and fatigue; you are happy only when you are concentrated on your goal.

Then you are on the way.

The trepidating restless stuff of the mind is hard to guard, hard to control. The intelligent man straightens it even as an arrow-maker straightens an arrow.

Born of water, the fish strains and struggles when thrown on land from out of its watery dwelling, even so does the mind-stuff when freed from the dominion of Mara.

Hard to master, unstable, wayward is the mind-stuff. It is good to be able to control it. A controlled mind-stuff brings happiness.

Hard to grasp, extremely clever, moving as it pleases, the mind-stuff is to be kept under control. A well-guarded mind-stuff brings happiness.

It wanders far, it wanders alone, it has no body, it dwells in the cavern of the heart. He who brings it under control, is liberated from the bondages of Mara.

One who has an unsteady mind, one who knows not the true Law, whose clarity is overwhelmed can never have his wisdom perfected.

One whose thoughts are never dissipated, whose mind is never perplexed, who has gone beyond good and evil, one who is thus wakeful has nothing to fear.

Know this body to be a mere earthen pot. Establish this mind like a city. And with knowledge as your weapon fight with Mara; guard preciously what you have conquered.

Lo, this body before long will lie prostrate on the ground, even as a valueless, senseless, useless piece of log.

Whatever a hater may do to a hater, whatever an enemy may do to an enemy, more evil is done by a misdirected mind.

Neither the father nor the mother nor any other relative can do as much good as a well-directed mind does.

These few verses answer to all the requirements of those whose mind has not been mastered. They point out the attachment that one has to old ways of being, thinking and reacting,

even when one is trying to come out of them. As soon as you are out of it by dint of your effort, you are like a fish out of water and you pant for breath because you are no longer in your surrounding of obscure desires.

Even when you make a resolution, the mind remains unstable. It is subtle, difficult to seize. Without seeming to do so, it is continually looking for its own satisfaction; and its intentions are hidden in the core of the heart so as not to show their true nature.

And while you do not forget the weakness of the body, you must try to strengthen the mind against its own weakness, you must with the sword of knowledge, fight against the hostile forces and protect preciously the progress you have made so that these forces may not deprive you of your progress, for they are terrible thieves.

And then there is a small couplet for those who are afraid of death, intended to liberate them from that fear. Finally there is a last small couplet for those who are attached to their family to show them the vanity of this attachment.

In the end, a last warning : an ill-directed, ill-controlled thought does more harm than what an enemy can do to an enemy or a hater to a hater. That is to say, even they who have the best of intentions in the world, if they do not have a wise control over their thought, will do more harm to themselves and to those whom they love than an enemy can do to an enemy or a hater to a hater.

The mind has a power of deception in its own regard which is incalculable. It clothes its desires and preferences with all kinds of wonderful intentions and it hides its trickeries, resentments and disappointments under more favourable appearances.

To overcome all that you must have the fearlessness of a warrior, and an honesty, a straightforwardness, a sincerity proof against all.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(*Contd.*)

MERE idealism can only have an effect if one has a strong will in the mind capable of forcing the vital to follow.

23-6-1934

***

It is only if one lives in the mind (provided it is a clear mind) or the psychic that one can to some extent understand oneself and control the nature.

23-6-1934

***

(*To live in the vital*)

I mean to live mainly in the vital, the mind and the rest serving as its instruments. Most men do that.

28-6-1934

***

(*What is it that prevents one from having a clear mind?*)

The obscurity of the physical and the falsehoods of the vital.

28-6-1934

***

(*What is meant by living inside?*)

There is an inner being and an inmost being which we call the psychic. When one meditates, one tries to go into the inner

being. If one does it then one feels very well that one has gone inside. What can be realised in meditation can also become the ordinary consciousness in which one lives. Then one feels what is now the ordinary consciousness to be something quite external and on the surface, not one's real self.

28-6-1934

⁂

All force comes from the Divine but it is more usually misused than used spiritually or rightly.

3-7-1934

⁂

(*How could Asura do tapasya and get power ?*)

It is quite easy. These powers are mental and vital of the larger mental and vital planes, not spiritual.

3-7-1934

⁂

It (the vital) is unhappy because it is following after its own desires.

10-7-1934

⁂

Entire retirement is not good, it makes people morbid and they plunge into a world of imaginations without any check from life and actuality. But to avoid useless talk and unhelpful social interchange, (it) is good if the vital can be made to acquiesce in an applied and serious sadhana.

12-7-1934

⁂

Mother does not usually look into past lives; only when things come of themselves from the past she looks.

24-7-1934

⁂

It is not a fact that all I write is meant equally for everybody. That assumes that everybody is alike and there is no difference between sadhak and sadhak. If it were so everybody would advance alike and have the same experiences and take the same time to progress by the same steps and stages. It is not so at all. In this case the general rules were laid down for one who had made no progress—but everything depends on how the yoga comes to each person.

26-7-1934

⁂

(*Writing a novel and sadhana*)

You can try, if you like. The difficulty is that the subject matter of a novel belongs mostly to the outer consciousness, so that a lowering or externalising can easily come. This apart from the difficulty of keeping the inner poise when putting the mind into outer work. If you could get an established poise within, then it would be possible to do any work without disturbing or lowering the consciousness.

21-8-1934

⁂

What is necessary for one need not be necessary for another.

6-9-1934

⁂

There must be a fixed will for the spiritual life, that alone can overcome all obstacles.

8-9-1934

⁂

There is evidence of literary talent in your poems; what has not yet come is the inspiration that vivifies the writing...it may come hereafter.

20-9-1934

*
**

For poetry one must have a special inspiration or genius. With literary capacity one can write good verse only.

Genius usually means an inborn power which develops of itself. Talent and capacity are not genius, they can be acquired. But that is the ordinary rule, by Yoga one can manifest what is concealed in the being.

22-9-1934

*
**

"Yoga only helps to bring out what was concealed in you."

What do they mean by that? In a certain sense everything is concealed in everybody as the Divine is there. There are also imperfections or latent capacities which can be brought forward or perfected. The "only" here means nothing therefore. Moreover all powers belong to the Divine, not to the individual. Not to recognise that and think of something as one's own is ignorance, not the attitude of a yogin or sadhak.

11-10-1934

*
**

You can see whether such a retirement suits you or not. It is not the same for all. Most cannot stand retirement.

There is no harm in that kind of seclusion ("to find myself more in contact with you") and it can help provided you maintain the inner peace and a simple quietude turned towards the Mother.

23-10-1934

*
**

It is no part of the sadhana to accept the uglinesses of the lower nature on the ground that they exist—if that is what is meant by realism. Our object is not to accept or enjoy these things but to get rid of them and create a life of spiritual beauty and perfection. So long as we accept these things, that cannot be done. To observe that these things are there and reject them, refusing to allow them to touch you is one thing; to accept and acquiesce in them is quite another.

15-12-1934

*
**

You must make up your mind what you want. There is no harm in drawing back from all vital and physical relations and wanting only the true relation—that is in fact what happens to everybody who wants the true realisation—the only thing kept is the universal goodwill (not vital affection). But if you swing about from one mood to another, then of course they will not understand and have some ground to say that they are perplexed by your variations....All depends upon your inner will and establishing an unity of will in yourself turned exclusively towards the Divine.

I think I have told you that *entire* physical retirement is seldom healthy, although a temporary retirement is often helpful. But the main thing is the *inner* detachment and complete turning to the Divine.

19-12-1934

SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO LITERATURE (XI)

Conclusion

THESE are broadly the three lines on which this Yoga can be pursued. Each one takes a particular faculty or power of the being for its base and fulcrum, and as the yoga develops, that basic power is cultured and gradually raised to its highest potential. But in actual practice it is found that these different processes are not exclusive. Each one as it proceeds touches and sets into motion the other processes also. Thus the doer of dedicated works, serving the Lord with his will yoked to the supreme Will, finds a spontaneous welling up of devotion and love for Him on whom all his activities are centred. So also is the Bhakta moved to express his inner surrender and adoration of the Lord in the entire submission of his will to the Lord's and all his outer actions become movements of consecration. So again does the sadhaka of the way of meditation and knowledge find that his increasing awareness of the presence of the Divine everywhere fills him with an irresistible sense of wonder, devotion and surrender in which his dynamic will becomes a joyous slave of the Divine so perceived. It is not that these developments are successive to each other. They are more or less simultaneous.

The sadhaka of the Integral Yoga chooses that part of his being which is most developed and ready and starts with the mode of Yoga natural to it. Thus if he is preponderently of a dynamic and expansive nature, he finds it natural to begin with his will disciplining itself in the way of Works; if he be primarily an emotional type and the heart is his central station of living he finds his way already selected for him; he takes the way of Love; or if he be more quietistic in temperament and accustomed to follow the lead of his mind, the *buddhi*, then the way of Meditation and Knowledge is the obvious line of progress for him. But human nature is not made of the mind alone or the heart alone

or the will only; the being is complex and what moves one part or one power of it has its repurcussions on the others in varying degrees. And especially in a Yoga like the Integral Yoga where the being in its entirety is exposed to the uplifting and transforming action of the Higher Shakti, it is most natural that alongside the main current of advance and progress, though in a lower key, other parts begin to respond in a contributory way and slowly gather strength to function on their own.

Whatever the starting-point and the main direction, the sadhana proceeds through four distinct phases. There is first a marked separation from the surface movements of the external nature and a growing awareness of a deeper and larger consciousness that makes itself felt. Thoughts, impulses, volitions begin to arise and function from this inner level of the being and the more one remains awake to this emerging expanse within the more is the normal human consciousness replaced by a deeper yogic consciousness. This new consciousness has to be brought into fuller sway, naturalised and made effective at all times.

As this is done with vigilance and patience, one tends to go still inward and discovers the real centre of life within, the soul or the psychic being, which is truly a portion of the Divine within oneself. The next phase in the sadhana is to draw this psychic element forward, evoke it in all the movements of mind, will and body, refer to it constantly, and thus organise one's whole life around the psychic. This operation is called the psychicisation of the being i.e., imparting the character of the psychic to all the rest of oneself, placing the whole of the being under the governance of the Psychic Monitor.

This gradual shift of the centre of one's consciousness from without to deep within has its repercussions in the opening of the higher levels of the being freed from the confines of the individual formulation. There is a natural extension of one's consciousness and a beginning of a living sense of unity with all in the universe around. One awakens to the throb in the universal Life of the same Divine Shakti that pulsates within oneself. This widening of the being in its expanse goes on under the impulsion of the psychic *puruṣa* till the whole of the universe is embraced.

That is not all. There is an effortless move upward too. The consciousness in the mind either ascends to the regions above it or gets open to the descent of what is above. These are the altitudes of the spiritual mind, the higher mind, the illumined mind, the intuitive mind etc., each of which has its own characteristic consciousness deriving from the Truth in manifestation, which is assimilated by the aspiring mind. There are several realisations of a transforming nature that the mind undergoes in its ascension. Thus for instance, above the boundaries of the Intellect, one is greeted by summits where all is silent : a Silence that impinges upon the consciousness as alone true and against the background of which all else appears temporary, fleeting and illusive. This is the belt of experience which has given rise to most of the theories of the illusoriness of the world and the sole reality of a Nihil, Nothing, an Ineffable. But that is not the final terminus.

Beyond the Silence are the glories of the *parārdha*, the Higher Worlds of Knowledge, Power and Joy with their corresponding principles and powers formulated in the individual. These are the planes of spiritual felicities which stir into life in the sadhaka. The vistas that open are endless, climbing from plateau to plateau, say the seers of the Veda. Farthest known are the worlds of Sat, Chit and Ananda. They too can be realised, not merely in some Transcendent beyond the universe, but here in the individual can those planes be embodied and manifested. And ultimately that is the aim of this Creation. The immediate aim of the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, however, is to rise above the bounds of the human mind, scale the heights of the higher, the illumined, the intuitive and still higher grades of the Mind and arrive at the Gnosis, the plane of Knowledge-Will which is the plenary manifestation of the Divine in its creative poise. That is the objective. The way to reach and receive it in one's own being and consciousness is the Yoga we have sketched out and whose central process is best recapitulated in the words of Sri Aurobindo :

"A disclosure from within or a descent from above are the two sovereign ways of the Yoga-Siddhi. An effort of the external surface mind or emotions, a tapasya of some kind may seem to

build up something of these things, but the results are usually uncertain and fragmentary, compared to the result of the two radical ways. That is why in this Yoga we insist always on an 'opening'—an opening inwards of the inner mind, vital, physical to the innermost part of us, the psychic, and an opening upwards to what is above the mind—as indispensable for the fruits of the sadhana.

The underlying reason for this is that this little mind, vital and body which we call ourselves is only a surface movement and not our 'self' at all....The real Self is not anywhere on the surface but deep within and above. Within is the soul supporting an inner mind, inner vital, inner physical in which there is a capacity for universal wideness and with it for the things now asked for—direct contact with the truth of self and things, taste of a universal bliss, liberation from the imprisoned smallness and sufferings of the gross physical body....It is according to our psychology, connected with the small outer personality by certain centres of consciousness of which we become aware by Yoga. Only a little of the inner being escapes through these centres into the outer life, but that little is the best part of ourselves and responsible for our art, poetry, philosophy, ideals, religious aspirations, efforts at knowledge and perfection. But the inner centres are for the most part closed or asleep—to open them and make them awake and active is one aim of Yoga. As they open, the powers and possibilities of the inner being also are aroused in us; we awake first to a larger consciousness and then to a cosmic consciousness; we are no longer little separate personalities with limited lives but centres of a universal action and in direct contact with cosmic forces. Moreover, instead of being unwillingly playthings of the latter, as is the surface person, we can become to a certain extent conscious and masters of the play of nature—how far this goes depending on the development of the inner being and its opening upward to the higher spiritual levels. At the same time the opening of the heart centre releases the psychic being which proceeds to make us aware of the Divine within us and of the higher Truth above us.

For the highest spiritual Self is not even behind our perso-

nality and bodily existence but is above it and altogether exceeds it. The highest of the inner centres is in the head, just as the deepest is the heart; but the centre which opens directly to the Self is above the head, altogether outside the physical body, in what is called the subtle body, *sūkṣma śarīra*. This Self has two aspects and the results of realising it correspond to these two aspects. One is static, a condition of wide peace, freedom, silence : the silent Self is unaffected by any action or experience; it impartially supports them but does not seem to originate them at all, rather to stand back detached or unconcerned, *udāsīna*. The other aspect is dynamic and that is experienced as a cosmic Self or Spirit which not only supports but originates and contains the whole cosmic action—not only that part of it which concerns our physical selves but also all that is beyond it—this world and all other worlds, the supraphysical as well as the physical ranges of the universe. Moreover, we feel the Self as one in all; but also we feel it as above all, transcendent, surpassing all individual birth or cosmic existence. To get into the universal Self—one in all—is to be liberated from ego; ego either becomes a small instrumental circumstance in the consciousness or even disappears from our consciousness altogether. This is the extinction or Nirvana of the ego. To get into the transcendent Self above all, makes us capable of transcending altogether even cosmic consciousness and action—it can be the way to that complete liberation from the world-existence which is called also extinction, *laya*, *mokṣa*, Nirvana.

It must be noted however that the opening upward does not necessarily lead to peace, silence and Nirvana only. The sadhak becomes aware not only of a great, eventually an infinite peace, silence, wideness above us, above the head as it were and extending into all physical and supraphysical space, but also he can become aware of other things—a vast Force in which is all Power, a vast Light in which is all Knowledge, a vast Ananda in which is all bliss and rapture. At first they appear as something essential, indeterminate, absolute, simple, *kevala*; a Nirvana into any of these things seems possible. But we can come to see too that this Force contains all forces, this Light all lights, this

Ananda all joy and bliss possible.And all this can descend into us. Any of them and all of them can come down, not peace alone; only the safest is to bring down first an absolute calm and peace, for that makes the descent of the rest more secure; otherwise it may be difficult for the external nature to contain or bear so much Force, Light, Knowledge or Ananda. All these things together make what we call the higher spiritual or Divine Consciousness. The psychic opening through the heart puts us primarily into connection with the individual Divine, the Divine in his inner relation with us; it is especially the source of love and bhakti. This upward opening puts us into direct relation with the whole Divine and can create in us the divine consciousness and a new birth or births of the spirit.

When the Peace is established, this higher or Divine Force from above can descend and work in us. It descends usually first into the head and liberates the inner mind centres, then into the heart centre and liberates fully the psychic and emotional being, then into the navel and other vital centres and liberates the inner vital, then into the Muladhara and below and liberates the inner physical being. It works at the same time for perfection as well as liberation; it takes up the whole nature part by part and deals with it, rejecting what has to be rejected, sublimating what has to be sublimated, creating what has to be created. It integrates, harmonises, establishes a new rhythm in the nature. It can bring down too a higher nature until, if that be aim of the sadhana, it becomes possible to bring down the supramental force and existence. All this is prepared, assisted, farthered by the work of the psychic being in the heart centre; the more it is open, in front, active, the quicker, safer, easier the working of the Force can be. The more love and bhakti and surrender grow in the heart, the more rapid and perfect becomes the evolution of the sadhana. For the descent and transformation imply at the same time an increasing contact and union with the Divine.

This is the fundamental rationale of the sadhana. It will be evident that the two most important things here are the opening of the heart centre and the opening of the mind centres to all that is behind and above them. For the heart opens to the psychic

being and the mind centres open to the higher consciousness and the nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the siddhi. The first opening is effected by a concentration in the heart, a call to the Divine to manifest within us and through the psychic to take up and lead the whole nature. Aspiration, prayer, bhakti, love, surrender are the main supports of this part of the sadhana—accompanied by a rejection of all that stands in the way of what we aspire for. The second opening is effected by a concentration of the consciousness in the head (afterwards, above it) and an aspiration and call and a sustained will for the descent of the divine Peace, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda into the being—the Peace first or the Peace and Force together. Some indeed receive Light first or Ananda first or some sudden pouring down of knowledge. With some there is first an opening which reveals to them a vast infinite Silence, Force, Light or Bliss above them and afterwards either they ascend to that or these things begin to descend into the lower nature. With others there is either the descent, first into the head, then down to the heart level, then to the navel and below and through the whole body, or else an inexplicable opening—without any sense of descent—of peace, light, wideness or power, or else a horizontal opening into the cosmic consciousness or in a suddenly widened mind an outburst of knowledge. Whatever comes has to be welcomed—for there is no absolute rule for all—but if the peace has not come first, care must be taken not to swell oneself in exultation or lose the balance. The capital movement however is when the Divine force or Shakti, the power of the Mother comes down and takes hold, for then the organisation of the consciousness begins and the larger foundation of the Yoga."

M. P. Pandit

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE NEW AGE

CHAPTER III

THE PROTESTANT REVOLUTION (*contd.*)

LUTHER AND CALVIN*

LET us cast a hurried glance at the main events of Luther's life in order to discern in it the vast complex of forces that were at work in the age, and the pattern of culture that was gradually emerging from the struggle.

But before we take a bird's-eye view of his life, we should note the fact that though Luther was the first to throw the spark that produced the Protestant revolution, he was not the originator of Protestantism. The germinal ideas which were fermenting in his epoch, and the cross-currents of thoughts which were shaping the historic events had their origin in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and there was nothing particularly new in the turn and colour Luther gave them except the informing and igniting force of his faith, sprung out of the depths of his inner struggle, and the explosive intensity of his daemonic personality, which realised the ideas.

About three quarters of a century before the birth of Luther, John Huss, a highly learned and esteemed priest of Bohemia, was appointed to conduct services of the Chapel of Bethlehem, where some sort of religious reform was already afoot. The Prayers of the Chapel were read in the native tongue of Bohemia, instead of in Latin. In his sermons and preachings, Huss slated the Church for having departed from the original simplicity of the religion of Jesus Christ. "Many members of the clergy are

* A correction..On page 24, (2nd para) of the August issue of the Advent replace *contemporary* by *compatriot.*

living profligate lives, owning great landed estates and paying the piper by stripping the shirts from the backs of the people in taxes." "A jungle of crawling things who call themselves shepherds of the flock,"—thus rang out the fulmination of John Huss. And he was not alone in his denunciation of the corrupt Church. Wycliffe of England, whose books had suddenly fallen into his hands, was equally emphatic in his censure of it. Huss was much influenced by Wycliffe and fortified in his resolve, which was not to destroy the Church, not to set up a new Church, but to lead the clergy through a renunciation of luxury, pomp, and secular power and all the evils attending upon them to the word of the Bible, the imitation of the life of the Christ, and a dedication to the service of the true apostolic Christianity. Not the commands and bulls of the priest, but the simple word of the scripture, which appealed straight to the conscience of man, must be the guide of religious life. Wycliffe wanted the Bible to be translated into the native tongues of all the Catholic peoples, so that they could drink in the Truth at its undefiled source, and refuse to lend themselves to the autocratic direction and dragooning by the clerical authority. Both Wycliffe and Huss were gentle souls who desired religious reform, not by violent revolution, but by peaceful and persuasive means. Wycliffe was condemned by the Church for his heresy, and Huss courted a martyr's death by burning at the stake. Erasmus, the Voltaire of the sixteenth century, also lashed and lampooned the Church, but only as a rationalist philosopher. His ideas exerted considerable influence on both Luther and Calvin. It can, therefore, be said that Protestantism was born much before it burst upon Europe, and was perhaps more a child of the later Mediaeval Age than of the Renaissance. Its main function has been to recover something invaluable from the clutter of the past for the progress of the West in the future.

Luther, the son of a miner, was brought up in an atmosphere of gloomy rigour and harsh discipline, "without joy or beauty or love." He was sent to the University of Erfurt where, taking the degree of Master of Arts, he proceeded to study Law and wed the daughter of a respectable burgher of Mansfield. But an accident—it was a providential incident, as indeed, all outstanding

accidents are, if one has but eyes to see—turned the whole course of his life. One day, while he was returning to Erfuhrt, he had to take shelter under a tree during a crashing thunderstorm. Suddenly a thunderbolt struck the tree, and the tremendous force of its impact knocked him to the ground. Overwhelmed with terror, he cried out : "Help, St. Anne, I will become a monk." So, turning his back upon the rosy prospects of his life, he entered the Augustinian monastery. There he practised severe austerities, yearning to purify himself that his soul might merit God's grace and be saved. Obsessed with the Augustinian theory of the total depravity of man, he passed through a poignant crisis of the soul, racked by an unspeakable agony of despair. But the agony pulsated with the throes of a new birth. For, in the encompassing gloom he suddenly saw a gleam of light in the words of St. Paul : "The just shall live by faith." [1] This was the genesis of the fundamental doctrine of the Lutheran Protestants—"salvation by faith alone", and not by the performance of the sacraments prescribed by the Church. It was a direct, personal, child-like approach to God in which Luther discovered the promise of salvation. There was nothing of the Renaissance Humanism in this faith, for Humanism fostered the spirit of scepticism and the exaltation of humanity. It was something different from the obscure and conventional faith of the Middle Ages. It was aglow with something of the apostolic faith of the early Christians, something imbued with the aroma of German mysticism. It recovered an element of religious life, which carried in it unbounded potentialities of spiritual progress for the future. Luther's approach, though ancient, had yet something of the modern in that it was inspired by the rationalistic and individualistic trends of the Renaissance mentality; but his discovery was an ancient one in a modern garb.

Luther was sent on a mission to Rome where he had the shock of his life. His heart bled to find the priests living a rich and luxurious life of unbridled self-indulgence. There was no Christianity in that imperial Mecca of the Christians. There was,

[1] "This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven."—Luther

instead, an entrenched, secularised and commercialised Church thriving on the crass credulity of popular superstition and ruling over all Christendom by imperious edicts and fiats. It was a Curia that had replaced justice by fanatical intolerance and vindictive violence. The sight of the triumphant corruption determined the mission of his life. The rebel in him rose in fierce indignation. His outraged soul was up in arms.

After his return from Rome, Luther was appointed professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg. There he lectured on the Bible, the Epistles of St. Paul, and Aristotle, and was much influenced by the thoughts of the three German mystics, Eckhart, Tauler and Suso. He published in 1518 an incomplete edition of Theologia Germanica, or "Book of the Perfect Life" written by a nameless member of the society of the Friends of God. It was at this time that he happened to come face to face with the repellent sale of indulgences, which the Roman Church had devised for amassing wealth. This brazen gulling of the innocent and superstitious people in the sacred name of religion revolted Luther and sparked off the movement which is known as the Protestant Revolution. An ardent seeker of personal salvation and an enthusiast for reform within the Church itself, was thus transformed overnight into a tempestuous iconoclast, who split asunder the fifteen hundred year old unity and universality of the Church, shattered its fabric, and set off a chain of reactions that had mighty repercussions not only in the religious, but in the cultural, philosophical, political, and economic life of the West.

Luther vehemently denounced the traffic in indulgences. He drew up a list of propositions called the ninety-five theses, and nailed them to the door of a church in Wittenberg. In these propositions he attacked the question of the indulgences, and invited public discussion on it. These theses, originally written in Latin were translated into German and broadcast all over the country. This put Luther at once into open conflict with the Church.But the people in general hailed these theses, because they found in them a strong justification for the galling grievances they had been themselves harbouring against the domination of the alien and degenerate Roman papacy. Luther went on assailing the

Church in a spate of tracts and pamphlets till the Pope was forced to excommunicate him. But when the Pope's Bull reached him, with his reckless courage he consigned it to the flames, declaring to the crowd assembled there : "Let the notice of excommunication go into the fire." He was asked to appear at Worms for his trial on a charge of heresy. He attended the diet, but refused to retract what he had said in his theses.[1] On his way back to Wittenberg, he was kidnapped to an old castle by the soldiers of his patron, the Elector of Saxony, and kept there in hiding for safety against the powerful wrath of the Roman Church. It was in the seclusion of this hiding that Luther translated the Bible into German, and thereby fortified the foundation of his Protestantism in the hearts of its millions of followers.[2] He became the national hero of Germany and the prophet of a religious revolution which the majority of the people in the West, and particularly in Germany, had been yearning for. But he soon found himself unable to restrain and control the forces of insurgence he had let loose. Things began to head for some sort of civil war. His followers whose number soon became legion demanded that he should lead them in an organised assault against the Catholic Church. Luther had not evidently dreamt that what he wanted to be a reform would soon turn out to be a revolution,—a revolution, not only religious, but political and social and economic. The Protestant princes began to seize the property of the Catholic monks, and drunk with the new wine of national sentiment, most Germans looked to Luther as their God-appointed champion in their revolt against the Roman Church and its oppressive autocracy. The spirit of liberty, accentuated by the strong individualistic note in Luther's preaching, roused the peasants against the feudal lords, and they approached Luther for help and guidance. But Luther abhorred all violent uprising. He rebuked the peasants and rebuffed them to their bewildered disappointment, and

[1] "I cannot...I will not...recant ! Here I stand"—Luther

[2] "In an incredibly short time he (Luther) finished the work which became a great literary landmark in the history of the German language and literature. It set the standard of speech and attained great popularity among the people."—Lucas (The Renaissance and the Reformation).

suggested to the princes to smash the revolt. He quailed before the very forces he had so passionately unleashed, and suffered his great reputation to be smirched by an ignominious back-sliding. But his gospel of individual freedom and democracy,[1] and the incorporation of secular interests in religious life spread to all parts of the Western world and constituted the groundwork of the modern age. Thanks to his preaching, traditional monasticism lost much of its sacred glamour. Monks began to marry, and large numbers of nuns escaped from cloistral confinement to live a free, open-air life of conjugal love and refined morals. The Protestant revolution thus helped the basic urge of the Renaissance—the affirmation of secular life and the consecration of earthly existence. But only to a certain extent. For, it negatived the same urge by its extravagant puritanical rigour, its distaste for the arts and graces of life, and its later destructive intolerance and fanaticism. By a significant irony of Providence, the breaker of the universality of the mediaeval Church ended by erecting a national Church in Germany; the liberator of the religious life of the people from the bondage of priestly authority surrendered their secular life to the control of the national State, which he invested with the divine right to rule. What had begun as a religious reform got grievously involved in a struggle for political and economic power. What had inspired and encouraged the democratic spirit in religion and morals suppressed the same spirit in the peasants and the commonalty. What had aimed at the emancipation and supremacy of individual conscience and a rational reorganisation of social life on the basis of a simple and sincere orientation to religious self-culture drenched a great part of Europe in blood and tears, and compelled the individual to submit to the yoke of the State.

Luther married a runaway nun and withdrew to the quiet happiness and disquieting worries of family life. Another Mirabeau fell from the leadership of a great movement. But the movement throve and spread like wild fire, led by other souls who, though

[1] He preached that each man was his own priest. He found no institutionalism in the Bible.

less inspired and intrepid than Luther, were more rational and consistent, more practically resourceful and prudent, more doctrinaire and dogmatic, and played a mixed and momentous role in working out the purpose of the Time-Spirit. Though people continued to admire and respect Luther, his life was forfeit, he was now an extinct volcano. Protestantism moved forward with surer steps and a more revolutionary drive towards its immediate objective. Luther had played his great part.

Alfred North Whitehead, who should have known better, complains that "the Reformation seems to me one of the calamities of history. If given more time, I think the Church would have reformed from within..."[1] This is a common enough misreading of the historical process, and viewing a historical event in the wrong perspective. Calamities of history are an integral part of the dialectic of history. They are like the catastrophes in the economy of nature. They serve to sweep away the accumulated junk-heaps of a dying past, so that they may not block the path of man's evolutionary progress. The historical process is amoral. It achieves its end as much by destruction as by construction. A ruthless destruction, whether on the material plane or on the plane of thoughts and ideas, is an indispensable pre-requisite for a new construction.

It is idle to imagine that "...given more time, the Church would have reformed from within." History tells us that attempts had been made, more or less earnest, and backed by a solid body of enlightened opinion, to induce the Roman Church to reform but the supercilious sovereignty of the powerful Church disdained to take any notice of them. As Henry S. Lucas says: "It was impossible for the church to adjust itself at once to the needs of the new age. The papacy had lately escaped destruction during the Great Schism (1378-1415) and the Age of the Councils (1409—49).The bull Execrabilis (1460) forbade any appeal to a council save by the pope himself, and the papacy now became supreme in the church. How could the hierarchy ever be induced

[1] *Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead* by Lucien Price

to divest itself of the privileges and abuses upon which it throve ? Reform seemed impossible."[1]

Whitehead further says : "...the view of Erasmus was that of the sensible and enlightened people, and if it could have been effectuated by an able leader, there need never have been an Ignatius Loyola and a Council of Trent." Here, too, the great philosopher allows his moral notions to cloud his historical knowledge. It is not the "sensible and enlightened people's views" that detonate revolutions, but the seething urge of the masses, concentrated and focussed in one or a few individuals, and thundering itself out through their voices. Erasmus had a strong intellectual sympathy with the popular urge. He wanted certain reforms to be effected in the Catholic Church in a reasonable, orderly, and gentle way. He was even bitter in his exposures and invectives. But, as Whitehead himself admits, "he lacked the force", because, we might add, he lacked the experience of the seething urge. He lacked the consuming fire that characterises the prophets and innovators. He was timid, and, as his later life shows, even insincere. But Luther was nothing if he was not all fire and flame. He had felt the urge of the masses, felt it like boiling blood shooting through his veins. He had felt, keenly, poignantly, the stifling gloom and the dead weight of the congealed conventions of mediaeval religion. In his frantic efforts to save his soul from eternal damnation, he had passed through a period of inner agony so excruciating as to drive him for a moment, not only to deny God but even to hate Him.[2] History bears ample testimony to such spiritual birth-pangs in the souls of heroic fibre. St. Paul had to pass through a similar struggle, and so had Augustine and Vivekananda, and many another. The throes of Luther's soul were the throes of Reformation. The gleam of light that Luther saw beyond the tunnel, the faith that suddenly welled up within him at the end of the travail, the hand

[1] *The Renaissance and the Reformation* by Henry S. Lucas

[2] "Is i not against all natural reason that God out of his mere whim deserts men, hardens them, damns them, as if he delighted in sins and in such torments of the wretched for eternity, he who is said to be of such mercy and goodness ? This appears iniquitous, cruel, and intolerable in God, by which very many have been offended in all ages. And who I would not be ? I was myself more than once driven to the very abyss of despair so that I wished I had never been created. Love God ? I hated him !"—Luther

of the divine Grace that he clung to as the rock of eternal safety and the only gateway to salvation, have been ever since the basal elements of the spiritual life of modern humanity the world over. A clean, pure, candid life of Godward tension, directed by the ethical instinct, and striving for God's Grace, was the treasure Luther unearthed out of the putrescent piles of mediaeval lumber. It is true that it was not a spiritual treasure-trove. His faith which was, in the beginning, instinct with a mystical element, became later an inner perception of faith in the grain of his ethical reason. There was an unmistakable streak of the Humanism of the Renaissance in the make-up of his complex nature. It is a pity that he could not remain long at the height of his perception and power, passively open to the instreaming inspiration of the Time-Spirit. He tottered, he stumbled, he fell. He suffered exotic influences and forces to befog his perception and pervert his power —a tragedy which has not unoften left its melancholy impress upon the history of humanity's onward march.

There is, however, one point on which we are all at one with Whitehead. "One of the worst pieces of luck that has befallen Europeans was that when it came time to reform the Church, the new forms were set by Martin Luther, who threw away the aesthetic and emotional appeal, and left only the dry bones of theology." The throwing overboard of all emotional and aesthetic appeal was indeed, a calamity, for this appeal is the shortest avenue to the attainment of Grace and the flowering of spiritual life. Religion without the glowing leaven of emotions and the light and joy of an aesthetic attraction becomes barren theology on the one hand, and dry ethics on the other. And so, indeed, it became in the hand of Luther. But was not that too necessary ? Has it not happened again and again in the history of religions that when emotions are turned into hysteria, when they become pathological, an effervescent turbidity, a symptom of neurosis, or a mere debauch of slush and slobber, the ethical reason of man is called upon to make a clean sweep of all that emasculating stuff and clear the passage for the religious advance of humanity ? The ethical reason renders an invaluable service by guiding man out of the rank overgrowths of his passions and emotions. In

itself it is neither religion, nor spirituality, but it prepares him for both. And it also saves religion from sinking into the morass of superstitions and blind formalism. Luther's achievement lay, apart from the impetus it gave to the Individualism and Nationalism of the times, in imbuing the secularised reason of man wih an ethical impulse, and an aspiration for the attainment of the higher truths of life through faith and Grace.

(to be continued)

RISHABHCHAND

BECAUSE THOU ART ALL-BEAUTY AND ALL-BLISS

(Sri Aurobindo's sonnet included in his 'Last Poem's)

I

THE sense of beauty in man awakes, evolves and blossoms with his growth of consciousness. It remains indeed a completely closed bud involved in a deep death-like slumber so long as he is insulated in his desire-soul which is incapable of the self-forgetful contemplation with the speculative instruments of the mind, heart and the senses so necessary for the perception and realisation of beauty. Now the objects which gratify his appetites and give him the excitement of pleasure are hailed as beautiful while those which thwart his passions, frustrate his ego and cause the contrary vibration of pain are denounced as ugly. In between these extremes are the things which are regarded as neither beautiful nor ugly but neutral because these give him an indifferent response and a non-committal state. But the three categories are not clearly defined water-tight compartments but being largely subject to the endlessly and variously shifting moods and colours of the chameleon ego, anything can assume any value. This is indeed a state of flux and chaos without any harmony or intelligible pattern and such is the experience of the mediocre majority. But in rare moments of the renaissance of wonder the film of familiarity which covers some objects is removed because the self is lost in the intensity of the faculty exercised and then the bud begins to open only to close again because the possessive instinct which would grab at this new experience of joy so different from the excitement of pleasure asserts itself. Once again the electric current of cognition of beauty is stopped because of the insulation by the small self. But the ordinary man is helped in prolonging this state of mergence or laya of the self by the pursuit of Art which 'imposes a credible order upon experience and thereby

elicits some perception of order *in* experience and finally brings man to a condition of serenity, stillness and reconciliation.' All true Art is the embodiment in a tangible medium of line, colour, stone or word of the subliminal vision of life and experience and its highest utility is to help him forget his egoistic desire-soul, imaginatively share in the inner vision of Sensuous, Imaginative and Intellectual Beauty revealed in it and even directly penetrate in a trance to these depths and heights of being if only he has become ready for it by purifying his personality and training it to a habit of inward concentration. The soul of the artist in his creative mood and the soul of the sympathetic critic in his moments of appreciation are therefore more and more deeply and enduringly open to beauty than the desire-soul. If the Art pursued is of a spiritual nature it can reveal even Psychic Beauty, Spiritual and Supramental Beauty, the essence and source of all beauty on all other levels. It can give man a glimpse of Eternal Beauty wandering on its way, guiding the evolution of the universe from one organisation of Beauty to higher and higher levels and kinds of Beauty. This is the greatest spiritual value of Art and its limit. For man must be brought back to his habitual self and poesy is only a deceiving elf, showing him in a lightning flash faery lands forlorn and even supernal realms of Spiritual Beauty only to precipitate him to his normal state of darkness with a burning forehead and a parching tongue and a heart high-sorrowful and aching. Art leads to and finds its fulfilment in Mysticism and Spiritual Sadhana which alone can make the perception of beauty everlasting in wakeful awareness and all-comprehensive in its range. For Art very often reveals beauty in a highly selective and concentrated area excluding many elements and aspects of ordinary and occult experience. But Spiritual Sadhana is a progressive enlargement of the horizon of the vision of beauty. The bud of beauty blooms indeed in Art but neither remains perennially and fully so, nor is it accessible to those pursuing it, in their normal awareness. Only in and by spiritual tapasya does it open petal by petal and irradiate its fragrance, for all time and in all levels of the surface being.

The first landmark in this energising of consciousness is the

stationing in the subliminal—the inner mental, vital and physical parts of the being. This awakens the perception of harmony or beauty in the plane of Ideas, Feelings and Sensations. Not only is the hidden element of beauty in each idea, feeling or sensation experienced but also all ideas are seen as emanations of One Mighty Abstract Idea of Beauty forming together a complex pattern of harmony, all feelings are felt as projections and combinations in a grand unified design of a single Force of Feeling and all sensations are realised as waves emerging in and out of an Ocean Heart of Sensation and even in their most tumultous surge contributing to the architectonic rhythm of sensation in the universe. Again the subliminal seer visions ideas crystallising into feelings and feelings coagulating into sensations. At another level he finds his power of vision of the occult awakens and that gives him the vision of the hidden worlds of Matter, Life and Mind pouring into this outer world, forces which weave the pattern of harmony with the strange and terrible as raw materials. The second landmark in the growth of consciousness is the discovery of and orientation in the Psychic Being. This gives the intuition, faith and certitude that all forces of Mind, Vital and Physical are but the manifestations and deployings of One Divine Shakti who controls, presides and guides their individual and collective destinies. To relate all to the Divine Ground of Being, to walk in a quiet confidence of the Grand Designer's wisdom and power of harmonising, and to transform by a silent pressure of sweetness and light the mind, heart and body into an enlightened acceptance of and complete self-surrender to the Divine Architect and Magician of Beauty are the unique and profound functions and powers of the Psychic with its progressive emergence and growth. The third step in spiritual evolution is the ascent beyond the Mind to the overhead planes which reveals the lower triple world of mind, life and body as translations, sometimes even perversions, not without their own beauty in an over-all picture, of Higher Thoughts, Illuminations, Intuitions which derive from a still higher source of Global Consciousness which is the originator of this universe. At this Overmental level a kind of universal aesthesis becomes possible. In its higher ranges this Overmind

merges into the Supramental whose delegate it itself happens to be. The Overmind vision sees the universe in time as an endless combination of powers each asserting its unique individuality but not disturbing the total rhythm and so every minute witnesses a new formation and pattern of the original elements putting forth in time their possibilities and potentialities, always presenting the grand spectacle of a rich, intricate and cosmic Harmony, a design of Unity in Multiplicity. The Supramental aesthesis sees the Transcendent Beauty pressing on Time and its mutations to embody and reveal Its own timeless harmonies and raptures. The future is not merely a working out of an already established order of possibles but a bringing out of the deeply involved timeless elements which shall be a prelude to a New Creation, the divinisation of the triple world, even the world of Matter so that it could manifest the Divine Beauty, the Divine Bliss and the Divine Love. Only now can the flower of the sense of beauty in man be said to be in complete blossom for it has become the multifoliate Mystic Rose open to the depths and the heights in the Individual, Universal and Transcendent planes of Consciousness. And the Rose of Beauty is the sister of the Rose of Love and both are forms of the Rose of Bliss. Sri Aurobindo's sonnet on the "All-Beautiful" embodies the experience of this Rose of Beauty, the supramental sense of Beauty.

II

"Delight is the soul of existence and Beauty the intense impression, the concentrated form of delight; Beauty like Love is an expression, a form of Ananda, created by Ananda, and composed of Ananda." The Omnipresent Reality, the Supreme Divine Mother draws all towards Her by these three powers of Her being, *Ānanda*, *Lāvanya* and *Prema*.

Because Thou art All-beauty and All-bliss,
My soul blind and enamoured yearns for Thee;
It bears Thy mystic touch in all that is
And thrills with the burden of that ecstasy.

The Divine Mother is the essential and pure Delight of Self-existence, for Her very being is characterised by completeness and perfection without any want or craving or the possibility of it at all and so She is All-bliss. This Ananda is found not only in Her state of transcendence of all cosmos in the upper hemisphere of Sat, Chit and Ananda but permeates the connecting world of Vijnana or Gnosis and extends, envelopes and interpenetrates the triple world of the mental, vital and physical Ignorance and even enters into the cavernous depths of the Inconscient foundation of all this creation. And again this pervasion is not only or merely general or collective but individual and particular so that each formation or manifestation in all the planes of consciousness exists in and only because of this All-Bliss. She is always the All-bliss to whatever state of consciousness she might have to submit Herself in Her mysterious ways of dealing with Her creatures, the wakeful or Jagra, the dreaming or Swapna, the deep sleep or Sushupthi or the superconscient fourth or Tureeya. Also all forms and kinds of joy in the different planes of consciousness are contained in this essential and seed-state of Bliss, nay only emanations or reflections or conditionings by the matrix of that plane of this Delight. Intensity of delight seeks expression in form and that form is Beauty and since this form is that of All-bliss, born in it, from it, it is All-Beauty. This is the first fundamental, complete and eternal Archetype of all beauty of which beautiful objects in the different planes are particular manifestations and it is the inexhaustible source of all future creations of beauty, remaining always beautiful in all states and planes of consciousness. In the completely expressive words of *Sri Vidya Tantra*, the Divine Mother is *Ānandamayī* and *Soundarya Ratnākarī*. Beauty and Bliss naturally evoke the response of Love, and All-Beauty and All-Bliss generate an all-entrancing and all-bewitching Love. The soul in man is all inflamed with love, enamoured, for union with this All-Beauty and All-Bliss. Love itself is born in the bliss of contact with Beauty or the experience of Bliss and expresses itself in an ardent yearning for either the Bliss of Identity or the Bliss of Union, the delight of experiencing oneness in the timeless beyond or the joy of coming

together in and with the accumulated experience of time. The aspiration is the pure and perfect supramental devotion, the *parābhakti* for the Divine Beauty and Divine Bliss, Love seeking Love for Love and because it is Love, not indeed bothering to know Her ways or purposes in advance but oblivious of all other considerations and consequences, blind, and bent only on enjoying Bliss, Beauty and Love as ends in themselves. There is no irritable reaching after knowing of any kind because of the certitude, faith and realisation of the absolute inevitability of the fulfilment of the Divine Will and dispensation. This is a condition of complete simplicity, spontaneity and self-giving and surrender. The head and all the powers of cognition and formulation ranging from the feeble cerebrations of the brain-mind to the global, multiple and unified comprehensions of the over-mind have fallen silent and the soul enjoys the beatitude of experiencing afresh with every moment the endlessly various and new manifestations of Beauty and Bliss. The mystic heart has taken wings and soars in the ampler ether, serener air and empyrean of beatitude of the supramental trust, humility, and love. The psychic being is not now the mere, simple spark of the divine in the human, harmonising and integrating the mortal members around its divine centre but a burning brazier of aspiration, adoration, love and surrender and complete consecration, a full-blown Supramental Purusha. The child has become the most completely child-like divesting itself of all its past childishness, nestling in the arms of the Divine and feeling the plenitude of the joy of the nourishing Beauty and Ananda of the Divine. All that exists is in the Divine Ground of Being, Sat which is at the same time Chit and Ananda. Each object is only a frontal manifestation of the Divine whose plenitude and perfection of Beauty and Bliss are involved in its secret depths and are pressing forward from within for evolution and transformation. It is continuously subject to the secret influence and mysterious magical handling and shaping spirit of a divine alchemy, a mystic touch. Very often the object itself is blissfully ignorant of this sacred presence and power working so benignantly within it and the impure observing consciousness shares in this oblivion, for to experience this divine hand is to come

into contact with the Infinite Ocean of Ananda which might well-nigh overwhelm and drown its consciousness. But the consciousness of the sadhaka of Supramental Yoga has established an imperturbable peace and immobility in his being and therefore has become fit to bear the ravishing and entrancing heights of joy, ecstasy. But the Ananda of the Divine is not a limited area or of finite measures. So that each time something of it is tasted and assimilated by the soul, a fresh intensity of it pours into the being and so it is felt always as a burden, but a burden of delight borne with delight and with a quiet and peaceful and also intense aspiration for more and more of the union with All-Beauty and All-Bliss. Every moment brings with it new intensities of this rapture and the being vibrates in tune with its higher rhythm, thrills in a dynamic and uplifting identification with the Beloved.

III

Love for the Divine is in response to and is reciprocated by the Divine Love of a millionfold intensity and wideness and so the Divine Beloved haunts the sadhaka and holds him in the enthralling net of Her Love by revealing Her immanent Beauty and Form in every creature in the universe.

> Behind all eyes I meet Thy secret gaze
> And in each voice I hear Thy magic tune :
> Thy sweetness haunts my heart through Nature's ways;
> Nowhere it beats now from Thy snare immune.

An eye is a focal centre of an organisation of consciousness for the perception of and communication with another organisation of consciousness and so the normal sensitive soul contacts the particular limited organisation of consciousness behind the eyes used by it. But behind all finite formations of consciousness is the Infinite Chit-Shakti whose individual embodiments and crystallisations these are, *Citirūpeṇa ya kṛtsnam etad vyāpya sthitaḥ jagat*. She is the supreme witness of all the movements of consciousness, *sarvadhī sākṣibhūta*, looking on at all the play

with a majesty and serene beauty and an immortal, unworldly and wonderful vision, a secret gaze. The Beloved Infinite Personality, Anantaguna Brahman is looking through all eyes at the human lover with a rapturous, wonder-struck sight. The eyes of the ugly, beautiful and neutral persons, of even the undivine and the antidivine beings, even the ghoul, the *pisāca* and the *rākṣasa*—all eyes are windows of the Divine Mother for seeing and revealing Her essential secret Form of Beauty and Bliss immanent in all, to the perceptive supramental vision of the beloved sadhaka. As with the eye so with the mighty world of the ear. Each voice is the self-expression of a limited consciousness whose ultimate propelling force is the grand secret rhythm of the Infinite Conscious-Person. All sweet voices catch and reflect something of the harmony of the mysterious divine source of All-Harmony and All-Beauty, Her magic tune. All jarring noises and discordant notes are only perversions of the eternal melody of the Divine singer. The supramental audition goes behind the surface reflections and refraction and hears the celestial music of the Divine Shakti in each voice. The rhythms of the Eternal behind the temporal have a tremendous transforming power and the supramental sense becomes aware of this slow, but steady and progressive alchemising power, the magic in the tunes of the Divine. Not only the persons in the human world become instruments of the Divine for communication with the beloved sadhaka, but every operation and movement of Nature becomes a vehicle of revelation. All the ways, the phenomena of Nature, the march and the cycle of the seasons, the raging of a tempest or the tumult of the sea, the river moving in a pulseless tremulous vein or the winds coming through the fields of sleep, the young lambs which bound as to the tabor's sound, the birds which enjoy the air they breathe and the reptiles and the insects and the flora and the fauna are all sources for the Divine to entrance the sadhaka and keep him in the spell of Her beauty. His heart is caught in the net of love and beauty of the All-Beauty and All-Bliss and it pulsates here, now, always to the Divine. It can no longer beat in tune with anything finite as the finite for a limited satisfaction of desire preoccupied with the surface-forms and appearances of

objects and forces ! It has lost its freedom to live in the Ignorance when an exclusive concentration on the finite was possible ! From the slave of Nature, Prakriti, bound in Ignorance, it has become now a slave of Supernature, Para Prakriti, caught in the snare of Divine Love, Beauty and Bliss. It has lost its separative consciousness and outlook in the freedom and largeness and enravishingly sweet tyranny of the Divine Beloved. This state of the blending of the opposites of bondage and freedom and the experience of both the freedom in bondage and the bondage in freedom is the supreme mystery and the profound privilege and felicity of the deep intimacy in love.

IV

This spiritual communion with the Divine, feeling Her mystic touch, meeting Her secret gaze, hearing Her magic tune and experiencing Her haunting sweetness in all Nature in a rapturous snare are the prelude to a deeper contact with the very body of the Divine Ananda Brahman in animate and inanimate creation and this extended to all space and all time.

It loves Thy body in all living things;
Thy joy is there in every leaf and stone :
The moments bring Thee on their fiery wings;
Sight's endless artistry is Thou alone.

The shapes and forms moulded and infused by life-energy are in obedience to a deep instinct for embodiment which is a translation on the vital-physical level of the original power of manifestation of the Supramental Shakti standing involved in the life-instinct and supporting it. And each form is only an aspect however crude and distorted or elegant and harmonious of the One Form or the Body of the Divine made of supramental substance which is the secret sustaining substratum of all bodies in the universe. The Divine is the life energy and the sadhaka loves the Vital as the Brahman. *Prāṇo Brahmeti vyajānāt.* And even Matter is Brahman. *Annaṁ ca Brahma.* All vital-physical and physical

creations, leaf and stone are shaped out of and exist in this All-bliss, Ananda. This vision of the Immanent, Incarnate Divine is not static or in a timeless state of trance but felt in time in the wakeful awareness, *jāgrat avasthā*. This is therefore a dynamic realisation. Time is a rapidly moving factor ringing changes with incredible alacrity and very often these are cataclysmic. Every creation is the result of a destruction of the old form to be destroyed in its turn and so on and on in an endless sequence. So the moments are pictured as moving with fiery wings destroying in order to create, creating in order to destroy but always fashioning ever-new shapes and forms. For the universe is never the same any two minutes, the appearance of a repetition of the same pattern being an illusion of the senses and brain-mind of man insensitive to the deeper realities and forces at work in the cosmos. To the true vision, Sight, the successive creations in time of the cosmos in an unending series with ever-various, complex designs and harmonies, the panorama is an endless artistry. But Time is the slave and docile instrument, a carrying vehicle, *vāhana* of the Timeless and every formation in Time is a manifestation of the Divine potentialities and so Time always bears and ushers the Divine to the sadhaka. And all this endless artistry is the Divine Omnipresent Reality. The One is in the All and as the All.

V

But the One is also and simultaneously more than the All. The Divine Mother is the Transcendent Shakti guiding and shaping all the individual formations in the universe and their collective consciousness to a previsioned progressively enlarging goal or destiny. Time is only the field for the working out of Her divine plan of spiritual evolution and transformation. All the past and present of Time are but the slow but sure preparation for the great consummation of a mighty future.

> Time voyages with Thee upon its prow
> And all the future's passionate hope is Thou.

The movement of Time is not an endlessly repeating vain round or cycle in Ignorance to be rejected at the earliest opportunity by the enlightened soul which must indeed seek its own personal salvation by an escape into the Timeless Beyond, but a purposive sojourn, a voyage with the Divine Mother seated on its projecting front part. The ship of Time is steered by the Timeless Infinite with all Her Wisdom, Power, Love and Ananda and so the future far from being a repetition of the past will be a fulfilment of all the aspirations of the past and open up new realisations and undreamed of masteries. It is full of an ardent, expectant and enthusiastic longing, a passionate hope. And its aspiration is for the realisation of the Divine in even its apparent opposites and their progressive transformation in Her Supramental image and glorious Beauty, Love and Ananda. The hope of the future is 'a happy beginning' in the realms of the supramental harmonies, 'a good continuation and no end—an endless progression' in the ocean of the Infinite consciousness of the All-Beautiful and the All-Blissful and the All-Loving, 'Divine and Adorable Mother'.

M. V. SEETARAMAN

LOGIC OF THE ORGANIC MIND

AS contrasted with the mechanical mind that seeks to analyse and put together the separate parts to form a whole as in the case of a machine, the organic mind does not find that the analysis will help the reconstitution of the whole. Reality is much less a machine than it is an organism. Machines are inventions which are dependent on the twofold processes of *making* parts *of* a whole and of a whole that works through the parts. Indeed an invention is an activity of *making* a whole by making parts. No doubt the whole is not merely a sum of its parts but that which has a particular activity or function which is not contained in any one of the parts as such. A clock or a motor car is not seen in the screws and bolts or springs. Therefore Indian Thought spoke of a whole, *avayavi* which is more than the sum of its parts, *avayavas*.

The human organism is not a machine. It is not made out of given parts. It has growth and expansion. The whole is not merely greater than the sum of its parts but is that which controls and sustains and utilises all parts for its own purposes. At the beginning these purposes of the whole may look as if they are for the preservation of the parts also. Secondly, it is seen that each part is a whole involving intricate functions and when out of the whole capable of living its own life. Therefore the human organism or for that matter any organism is a whole of organisms which range from the minutest to the vastest. To quote Ronald Collin "We have had to suppose a philosophical Absolute in which swam, so to speak, infinite number of galaxies. Similarly within our own galaxy or Milky Way swam innumerable suns. Within our solar system swam planets. Upon the surface of our planet, the Earth, swam the world of organic life. Within this world of organic life swam individual man, within man cells, within cells molecules, within molecules electrons." (*Theory of Celestial Influence*. p. 242). There is an organic interdependence between

all this vast Absolute, which presents a pattern of all-organized existence. It is clear that "Each world or cosmos is incommensurable with the one which contains it. It disappears in the greater one, becomes invisible in relation to it. The higher cosmos contains infinite possibilities for the lower, is god for the lower...." (*ibid.*) In this sense every world may be taken as absolute or as god for the smaller scale of entity. Yet man, by his extraordinary complex nature, is apparently endowed with the power of apprehending not only the world immediately above him—that is, the world of organic life of which he forms part—but many higher worlds, the Earth, the Sun, the Milky Way, and he can even philosophically suppose an Absolute of absolutes. So that man has many absolutes or gods from which to choose". (ibid).

This is a vast picture of the Universe as Organism, in its actual condition. All indeed are interrelated in one manner of subsumption, absorption and growth. These three principles are operative—the higher order includes or subsumes, reorganizes and orientates the lower which merges into it. The higher Self or God or Consciousness is different in a radical manner from the lower in so far as it integrates and shapes the lower according to its own law of being. Remarkable studies in this process have been made by the Ouspensky School as well as the Bergsonian schools. The logical principles involved in the concept of the Organic are (i) the organism is supported and organised and utilised by a conscious self for its own purposes. (ii) An organism cannot be without a conscious self. (iii) The conscious self that organically operates the organism is higher than that which it organises because it is seen that lower selves can be organized for their own sake of survival by the higher. Therefore the lower becomes the 'body' of the higher Self. This may go on *ad infinitum* till we arrive at the Highest Self which supports the totality of Nature or selves and is called the Philosophical Absolute. It is true that normally we find that a body is that which is a body only till a self resides and operates in and through it, and disintegrates when the self departs from it. This disintegration is in one sense a fall to a lower condition, which prepares for a regrouping of the same into a new organism.

The principle of subsumption, reorganisation and growth and existing for the purposes of the consciousness or Self which so does subsume the other elements or organisms or consciousnesses or selves is absolutely necessary to recognize as the principle of integrative action. That the higher consciousness will do this in the light of its own vast resources of inner being is a fact that has to be clearly recognized.

Any unification of the mental, vital and physical life cannot merely juxtapose these and hope for the best. An inherent difficulty exists in their mutual relationship, which is inevitable for the three are in a sense inseparable even like the three forces of *sattva* (that which makes for being) and *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (passivity or static being). Existence is the challenge between activity and passivity, and it is in the supreme balance of the system of the organic (*samāna*) or the homeostasis there is found the principle of organic synthesis or system. To interpret then this dynamic process of Reality in terms of mechanical inventiveness is to apply a lower principle to explain a higher principle. Indeed the Consciousness of a higher order is such that its laws are not apparent to the lower and indeed which may appear to be contradictory to its own. In other words, it is in the organic that we discover levels of consciousness which differ from each other radically but none-the-less characteristics of it, and we also find the actual integrativeness which our logic of the mechanical mind or intellect or ignorance refuses to recognize or is chary of accepting.

The organicistic views of reality then take seriously the fact of life and growth and subordination of life to life, of mind to mind, of matter to life and mind and so on.

The recognition of this organic order or hierarchy of being is very important. It may be one way by which we can conceive of a dynamic growing Absolute or System that is capable of revealing real existences and values, which absolute idealism has been unable to do.

Through the organic conception we return from barren intellect to Being; from dialectic of oppositions and polar opposites to integration of systems of growth. Biologocal science

indeed has shown the way towards psychical integration or rather has pointed out the principle of subordination, absorption and transformation in being, function and unity which entail growth or development. But there is one important feature also that has to be recognised. The fact of degeneracy, decay, and 'entropy' so to speak which leads to death of the organism. It is precisely the ideal of organic reality to seek transcendence over this decaying and disintegrative tendency of organism by a will to reorganise itself in higher systems of *longer* duration. Such is the concept of Real again. It is just one more step to the logic of the Infinite which is the promise of a further goal of philosophy.

The Divine Evolutionism has to include the truths of both the organic mind and the Infinite Consciousness-Being.

The integration of all the lower planes of being in and through the organic principles of subsumption, organisation, enjoyment for the purposes of the higher leads through degrees of organizations in the very texture of the organism. The very many systems of the body, such as the bonal, muscular, glandular, nervous, lymphatic, and circulatory, with all their different kinds of cells in continuous change is a revelation of the oneness-manyness principle from the microcosmic and intra-cellular to the whole. The unity as well as diversity progress in an integrative manner and reenforce and support each other. If this is so in the lowest pattern of existence even in the Ignorance, it is in the conscious organisation of our consciousness with higher consciousness of higher worlds or Gods that helps the ascent to a higher kind of being or life. A transcendence over the human does not mean the disintegration of the organic evolution. No doubt it is kept an open question as to whether the person who so evolves as a member of a higher or highest Consciousness would develop a higher type of organism or higher mechanisms in his present organism that would reflect or reinterpret or creatively respond to the higher worlds. The supersensory or para-sensory facts of life do lend some promise of such developments. It would yet be limited to the lower by the drag that may be placed on the higher powers even as the vital and the physical and lower mental of ours acts as limiting and interferent principles over our own

present higher mental intuitions. A higher than the human consciousness or radically different from it, would demand a discarding of the many organs of the present human or perhaps entail different creative functions for the same. The Infinite is an ever advancing and pregnant Reality throwing up immense Realisations.

K.C.VARADACHARI

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER

EDUCATION

XII

WE have followed so far the teachings of the Mother on what she calls the Science of Living. We have seen that the aim of education she holds up before us is nothing short of a full and organic flowering of all the parts of our being and their integration round the soul centre. This ideal of integration is much in the air today, and the latest development in psychology is tending, slowly but steadily, from psycho-analysis to psycho-synthesis. Unity being the watchword of progress in the modern world, a unified and harmonious perfection, individual and collective, has come to be regarded by pioneering thought as the true end of education. There has been started in America an institution called the Foundation for Integrated Education. Writing on the purpose and programme of the Foundation, the President, K.F. Mather, says : "The search for the underlying principle that will give vitality to integrative education may seem to be an academic task. It must indeed be prosecuted by specialists in the various disciplines of learning, but they must be persons, like those already embraced within the activities of the Foundation, who are concerned not only with the acqusition of knowledge but also with its practical application in everyday life. Research must be considered only as a means to an end. The end is to integrate mankind, to insure that widespread acceptance of unifying concepts and to establish the community of understanding which must inevitably precede the attainment of world order...."

The purpose and the programme of the Foundation, as described above, are, indeed, admirable in themselves, and evidently derived from the enlightened and progressive thought

of the founders of the institution. But what is lacking in them is the perception that the mind of man, however enlightened and embracing it may be, cannot but work within its narrow orbit, and is, therefore, constitutionally incapable of apprehending a true unity. Even its widest conception of a totality is but a syncretic summation or aggregation—a piecing together of parts to form a simulacrum of totality. The perception of an indivisible unity, a global harmony, a universal homogeneous whole is beyond its normal reach. Unity and infinity are, in a sense, the obverse and reverse of the same truth of existence. We can realise universal unity only if we have realised infinity. But the mind of man, finite and divisive, cannot realise infinity. If, by an aspiring spiritual endeavour, or by a sudden self-transcendence, it comes in contact with infinity, it merges in the spiritual Mind whose characteristic vision is an unhorizoned, boundless existence, which is in every thing and being, deploying its endless diversity in Time and Space. Or, it is lost in a featureless existence about which nothing can be predicated. It can, therefore, be said that unless our limited mental consciousness breaks out of its constitutional bounds, and unites with the infinite Consciousness, which is at play in the universe, it can never realise the unity of existence; and all its intellectual conceptions of unity can only be a blurred and fragmentary image, insecurely held and imperfectly realisable in life.

There is another institution founded in America, Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, having branches in Italy, France and Greece. Its aim is to discover man's true Self, "the unifying and controlling Principle" of his life, and integrate his manifold personality round that unifying centre. It is "a method of psychological development and Self-realisation for those who refuse to remain the slaves of their inner phantasms or of external influences, who refuse to submit passively to the play of psychological forces which is going on within them, and who are determined to become the master of their own lives." It is also "a method if integral education which tends not only to favor the development of the various abilities of the child or of the adolescent, but also helps him to discover and realise his true spiritual nature and to

develop under its guidance an harmonious, radiant and efficient personality."[1]

All this urge of the modern progressive man towards integration, organisation and unification of the human personality is a mental foreshadowig of the spiritual truth of unity, which is dawning upon human consciousness. It heralds an evolutionary nisus, a leap from the divisive consciousness of the mind to the all-embracing and all-reconciling consciousness of the Supermind. The sooner the human mind awakes to this truth, and surrenders itself with all its puny standards and paltry imaginative idealism to the higher supramental consciousness, which is beckoning to it, the better the chances of its realising the unity towards which it feels impelled as much by an inner urge as by the compulsion of outer circumstances. It must never lose sight of the truth that unity is nowhere but in infinity, and that no amount of imaginative idealism can lead it to a concrete and constant realisation of it. An integrative education must have for its fundamental object the raising of the mind of the student to the infinite Consciousness of the Supermind. If this object of education is scouted as Utopian or impracticable, the modern ideal of integration and unity, of synthesis and harmony, will ever remain a tantalising chimera.

There is another point to be noted in regard to the ideal of integral education. I have already referred to it before, but it will bear a repetition here. It must be carefully understood that so long as the soul of man, the divine and deathless nucleus of his individuality, is not discovered and made the guide and master of his whole being and life, the problem of integration can never be solved. It is not possible to organise and integrate the parts of nature without taking cognisance of the living centre, which has assumed the parts and all that they contain for its self-expression. Life, in its individual aspect, is a field for the self-expression of the soul. The discovery and realisation of that which expresses itself in life must, therefore, be the primary and principal aim of any system of education which proposes to

[1] *Dynamic Psychology and Psychosynthesis*—by Roberto Assagioli, M.D.

be integrative. It is a happy augury that modern psychology is advancing, though fumblingly and with hesitant and confused seeking, towards this discovery. It is sure to get over its initial hesitancies and handicaps before long, and realise its objective. That realisation will be a landmark in the history of human culture. It will revolutionise not only education, but the entire texture of the life of mankind—its philosophy, psychology, politics, economics, social relations, and all the facets of its civilisaion.

The Mother's scheme of education has this integral organisation and perfection of human life as its goal. It is revolutionary in that it puts the first thing first in its prospectus and programme, however difficult it may be to attain it. It is uncompromsing in its demand, and unfaltering in the working out of its ideal; for it knows that to compromise with the chaotic thoughts of the present and compound with its erratic tendencies and floundering experiments, its aimless drift and stubborn sceptical bias, would be to defeat its own purpose. It knows that the spirit of man is unconquerable, and that its present subjection to matter and the senses is a passing phase of human culture. The abject degradation of man to the status of an automaton, a robot, a mere cell in the vast body of the social machine[1] is an affront to his divine manhood. It cannot endure any longer. The spirit of man is rising again, and to help it rise to its feet and march forward to the conquest of its inherent freedom and dignity is what the Mother means to do by her revolutionary educational venture. The question of possibility and practicality does not arise, for it is grounded in the limited number of psychological and physical factors operative in the world today. These are what we glorify as facts. But the facts of darkness are not the facts of light. The facts of today need not necessarily remain the facts of tomorrow. The history of culture is a swing between opposites. The prophet or pioneer is one who embodies the emergent spirit and the seminal ideas of a new epoch, calls forth the latent potentials of the present, marshals and mobilises them, and leads them to the creation

[1] "Man does not belong to the society but to the Divine. Those who try to weaken the Divine within him by imposing on his mind and life and soul slavery to the society and its numberless exterior bonds, have lost sight of the true goal of humanity."—Sri Aurobindo

of the future. He has to cleave through the barrage of reactionary forces, and hew his way through many a virgin forest. It is only thus that the impossibilities of one age become not only possible but are realised in another, and dreams and fantasies turn into concrete, tangible facts. It is a poor mind that restricts its vision to the facts of the present.

We proceed, then, from the aim of education, which we have already recapitulated, to the methods and processes by which the aim can be fully realised.

"The education of a human being should begin at his very birth and continue throughout the whole length of his life."[1] All life is a school. We live to acquire knowledge; and the more knowledge we acquire, the more we find that there is an immeasurable more to acquire. For, knowledge being infinite, education must needs be a continuous process. All circumstances, all happenings, inner and outer, must be taken advantage of to extend and enrich knowledge. But this is only the theoretical side of education. The application of the acquired knowledge to life, the harnessing of the intrinsic power of knowledge to a widening and deepening of life, to the unsealing of life's hidden founts of joy and beauty, love and sweetness, is the practical side, the side of self-expression. No education can be called complete that neglects either of these two sides. A simultaneous development of knowledge and its power of expression in life form the warp and woof of a sound and integral system of education.

"...If the education is to have its maximum result, it must begin even before birth : it is the mother herself who proceeds with this education by means of a twofold action, first, upon herself for her own improvement, and secondly, upon the child which she is forming within her physically. Certain it is that the nature of the child about to be born will depend very much upon the mother who forms it, upon her aspiration and will as much as upon the material surroundings in which she lives. The part of education which the Mother has to go through is to see that her thoughts

[1] *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education*

are always beautiful and pure, her feelings always noble and fine, her material surroundings as harmonious as possible and full of a great simplicity. And if in addition she has a conscious and definite will to form the child according to the highest ideal she can conceive, then the very best conditions are provided for the child to come into the world with the maximum of possibilities. How many difficult efforts and useless complications are avoided thereby."[1]

The Mother indicates in the above passage what should be the very first initiation of the child's education. She speaks of the twofold action of the mother in the direction of education—one upon herself, for her own improvement, and the other, upon the child in her womb. This twofold action should begin long before the child's birth; in fact, from the very time of the conception. But the implication of the Mother's words is that the married woman should live and conduct herself in such a way as to be worthy of being the mother of a worthy child. It is not possible for a wife who has lived a thoughtless and careless life to set about, all on a sudden, improving herself as soon as she conceives. There must be a persistent background of a sustained effort at self-improvement from her own childhood; and what she is expected to try after the conception is only an intensified form of the same endeavour. Then the Mother speaks of the will and aspiration of the prospective mother, the material surroundings in the midst of which she lives, her thoughts and feelings, and, particularly, "a conscious and definite will in her to form the child according to the highest ideal she can conceive...." All this is, indeed, a radical departure from the conceptions of education we have learnt from the West. The Mother's ideas recall the ancient Indian conceptions of marriage, family life, education, the up-bringing of the child etc. Though her scheme of education goes beyond the ancient norms in so far as it bears upon the advent of the supramental race upon earth, there is so close a resemblance between them that it would be interesting to refer to some of the

[1] *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education*

aspects of ancient Indian life pertaining to the ideal of education with which we are here concerned.

Marriage was regarded in ancient India as a sacrament. The wife was looked upon as a fellow-traveller on the path of Dharma —Sahadharmini, Dharmapatni. It was a sacred tie that bound husband and wife together. Sexual life was so regulated and disciplined as to help the gradual control and sublimation of the carnal passions, and lead the couple towards spiritual liberation. From marriage onwards every act of the married pair, every function in the family bore a double significance, social and spiritual. Nothing was done for their selfish, personal ends. The physical relation between them, the act of procreation, the conception, the care of the wife during her pregnancy, the birth of the child, its education etc., everything was studied with psychological depth and minuteness, and in relation to the ultimate spiritual goal of human life. The divine grace and guidance were sought at every turn of life, and a religious ceremony in which the divine sanction and benediction were invoked preceded every important function in the family. The Rishis, who were the guardians, leaders and law-givers of the society, were men endowed with spiritual vision and intuition. They knew that the education of the child begins from the time of the conception, and that the nature and character, thoughts and feelings, dreams and aspirations, habits and tendencies of the parents, and particularly of the mother, all go into the forming of the embryo. They were conversant with the psychological processes of the conception, formation and birth of the child as perfectly as the modern eugenic and genetics know or presume to know their physical processes. They laid down elaborate rules concerning reproduction, conception, gestation etc. In regard to the act of reproduction, for instance, it is stated in the sacred books that the parents should engage in it as in a holy sacrament, with the purest feeling of mutual love oriented exclusively towards God or their adored Deity, and a silent prayer for a noble and heroic offspring. Lust sublimated into love and religious adoration created an atmosphere the radiance of whose purity attracted the more highly evolved souls precipitating into human birth. It was in this way that a superior

type of humanity was evolved on earth by the purity and aspiration of the parents. It was thus that the invaluable treasures of Indian culture were created, and diffused to all parts of the globe. But since lust replaced love, and sex relations degenerated into the sordid grossness of physical enjoyment, the old atmosphere of prayerful purity disappeared, and the atmosphere that followed became turbid with carnal passions and animal appetites, which invited raw, crude, and less evolved human souls, and not unoften even low and evil spirits, to the earth scene. Human culture gradually lapsed into civilised barbarism, all the more heinous by virtue of its intellectual achievements, and human society was torn with no end of discords. This occult truth conditioning the birth of the child can only be flouted as superstition at the risk of a further lapse into a fiercer anarchy and a greater darkening of the cultural horizon. The ancient sciences of eugenics and genetics can yet lead us to a better understanding of the laws that govern the birth of the child. To undo the evil generated in the very process of birth would tax all the resources even of the most embracing and integrative system of education.

It must be noted that the Mother has her own way of dealing with the problem. The times have changed, human culture and ways of living have undergone a great metamorphosis, and the aspirations stirring today in the hearts of the heralds of the new Dawn point to a perfection and fulfilment of man, individual and collective, which was not envisaged even in the most glorious days of Indian history. Man's mission in life is not to repeat the past, but to create a new and greater future.

In one of the later chapters we shall try to study some of the distinctive features of the Mother's system of education, which is meant for the rising generation of mankind in whom she discerns the will to achieve, in the field of human perfection, miracles more astounding than those achieved by science in the world of physical nature.

"We are not here to do (only a little better) what the others do. We are here to do what the others *cannot do*, because they do not have even the idea that it can be done.

We are here to open the way of the future to children who belong to future.

Anything else is not worth the trouble and not worthy of Sri Aurobindo's help."[1]

(To be continued)

RISHABHCHAND

[1] The Mother wrote the above in reply to a question put by a professor of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

REVIEWS

Sri Aurobindo : Three Essays *by V. Chandrasekharam* (Copies available from The Personal Bookshop, 10, Congress Building, 111, Mount Road, Madras-6. Price Rs. 2).

SRI Chandrasekharam is a learned and venerable Aurobindonian, now in his eighties, who exemplifies the ideal of simple living and high thinking. His *Study of 'The Life Divine'* (1941) was a masterpiece of compression; he could penetrate the complex layers of Aurobindonian philosophy and present to us the 'essence' of the whole. A mastery of thought as well as language is vital for a philosopher, and Sri Chandrasekharam's writing reveals such double mastery. The three essays now brought together (published originally in *Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual* and *The Advent*) must thus prove a wonderful treat for the awakening mind.

The first essay, while attempting to bring out the significance of Sri Aurobindo's advent, incidentally traces briefly the development of Indian spiritual thought. After dispelling the fog of metaphysical speculation on the *Gita*, Sri Chandrasekharam explains the Aurobindonian luminous interpretation of Vedic mysticism and the *Gita*'s teaching. It was Sri Aurobindo's destiny both to recover India's quintessential past and to assimilate all subsequent developments and new movements and give an integrated statement of it all in the logic and language of our time; and this he accomplished in *The Life Divine*.

The second essay on 'Sri Aurobindo and the Veda' is to be read as a foretaste of Sri Aurobindo's book *On the Veda*. Sri Aurobindo saw in the *Veda* "a world of the highest spiritual splendour...a world unique in its spiritual effort and achievement". Perceiving the 'imprisoned splendour', he released and revealed it to the world. After showing how Sri Aurobindo succeeded in plucking the heart of the mystery where generations of scholars

had floundered Sri Chandrasekharam briefly considers the two primary myths of the *Veda* viz. the Angirasa legend and the victory of Indra over Vritra.

The third essay on the Taittiriya Upanishad crystallizes the thought in the Upanishad and describes the way to the Ancient Knowledge. Man has to transcend the *Manomaya* and reach the *Vijñānamaya* and from there effect the transition to the *Anandamaya*, the Being of Joy Eternal. Thus man's 'fullest spiritual development' is through *Vijñāna*. Man must not only effect the ascent to it, but also bring the power of *Vijñāna* to the earth nature, and thus abolish the badge of ill and corruption that still clings to matter.

Referring earlier to Sri Aurobindo as the 'poet-philosopher', Sri Chandrasekharam says : "On the higher levels, the poet-philosopher is a most happy combination—the marriage of a male and female power, so to say, bringing to birth fruitful visions of the truth of things". Once, when the intellectual dialectics of the Philosopher formed a perfect union with the symbolic peregrinations of the Poet, the *Bhagavad Gita* appeared; that rare conjunction has now happened again, and we have today Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, an epic in which philosophy is perfectly subsumed, and a cosmic poem that provokes us to hail its author as the complete poet, the ultimate poet.

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